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SUBJECT: EUR DAS KRAMER'S MOSCOW TALKS ON TRANSNISTRIA

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns. Reason: 1.4 (b, d)

Summary

¶1. (C) EUR DAS David Kramer held talks on Transnistria/Moldova in Moscow April 6 at the MFA with DFM Grigoriy Karasin, Ambassador-at-Large Valeriy Kenyaikin, Ambassador-at-Large Valeriy Nesterushkin; at the Security Council with Andrey Kuzin; and at the Duma with Andrey Kokoshin. Kramer stressed to all interlocutors that the Transnistria conflict is an area in which the U.S. and Russia can cooperate to achieve a resumption of negotiations in the 5 plus 2 format on the basis of the Moldovan draft. He called for international pressure on Transnistria to negotiate in good faith. He said that internationalizing the peacekeeping force would also help lead to U.S. ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty. Kramer's Russian interlocutors stressed the need for direct talks between Moldovan President Voronin and Transnistrian leader Smirnov as equal parties to the negotiations. Only when those two came to an agreement should the international community get involved. The Russians considered Kosovo to be an inevitable precedent. They were willing to think about internationalization of the PKF, but only as a result of the peace process. End Summary.

MFA

¶2. (C) EUR DAS Kramer met on April 6 with Ambassador-at-Large for the Transnistria conflict Nesterushkin and with Kenyaikin, who supervises the Ambassadors-at-Large for all the frozen conflicts. The meeting was later joined on the Russian side by DFM Karasin and on the U.S. side by Ambassador Burns.

¶3. (C) Kramer led off by recalling that Karasin had called Transnistria a conflict that the U.S. and Russia can work together to resolve, recognizing the interests of other parties as well. The meetings in the 5 plus 2 and 3 plus 2 formats have not been productive. We need to revive the process, using as a basis the plan that Moldovan negotiators Sova and Tkaciuk have presented to the Russians, which has Voronin's support. Working together, Russia and the U.S. can induce the international community to pressure Transnistria, whose leaders are satisfied with the status quo. Russia and the U.S. can also work to internationalize the PKF; in addition to its influence on the conflict, this (along with withdrawal of munitions from Colbasna and agreement on the Gudauta base in Georgia) could also lead to U.S. ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty.

¶4. (C) Kenyaikin started his reply by saying that the treatment of Kosovo would be an inevitable precedent for Transnistria and other frozen conflicts. Two elements of Kosovo are applicable to the other conflicts. First, no one gave the international community the right to violate the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia without the latter's agreement. Second, a solution to the Kosovo conflict can only be achieved through negotiation. Kenyaikin clarified that Russia's recognition that Kosovo will be a precedent does not mean that Russia favors a particular result to the peace process.

¶ 15. (C) Kenyaikin stated that an agreement must be worked out between the parties, on the basis that both are equal negotiating partners; and then taken up in the 5 plus 2 process. The Moldovan view is opposite: that the two parties are Moldova and the international community; that these two must come to an agreement; and that the international community must impose this agreement on Transnistria. Russia does not share that approach. With regard to the PKF, Kenyaikin said Russia is willing to discuss internationalization, but as a result of political agreement, not at the beginning of the process. Internationalization first would not be acceptable to Transnistria, which sees the Russian PKF as guarantor of the peace.

¶ 16. (C) In reply, Kramer outlined the U.S. position on why Kosovo is not a precedent. In the case of Transnistria, he said, Kosovo is only the latest in a long line of excuses for the lack of progress. Kramer said Voronin will not meet with Smirnov, and the history of the negotiations makes that attitude understandable. With regard to internationalizing the PKF, obviously that needs to be part of and in parallel with the peace process, not a separate decision.

¶ 17. (C) When Karasin joined the meeting, he repeated many of Kenyaikin's positions. He stressed the need for a common document which the two sides could agree would be the basis for negotiations. Kramer responded that the Moldovan package

MOSCOW 00001579 002 OF 002

provided the basis for discussions. He also noted that the Transnistrians seem to have no interest in moving forward. Karasin agreed that this may have been the case two years ago, but now the Transnistrians are very unhappy with the status quo. There needs to be a dialogue between the parties, and it is not clear who on the Moldovan side, below the level of Voronin, has a clear mandate to engage in such dialogue.

Security Council

¶ 18. (C) At the Security Council, Kramer made the same points, and Kuzin's response was almost identical to the MFA's. He noted that Russia has good relations with both the Moldovans and the Transnistrians, and urged the U.S. to widen its direct contacts with the Transnistrian de facto authorities. He believed internationalizing the PKF should not be a first step, but part of a long process of dialogue and CBMs. Moscow does not dream of a permanent military presence, and has never rejected the Istanbul commitments, burdensome as they are. Economic CBMs should take precedence, including "freeing Transnistria from the measures taken by Ukraine" (i.e., the Customs regime).

¶ 19. (C) Kramer thanked Kuzin for raising the Istanbul commitments, and repeated that internationalizing the PKF could help lead to U.S. ratification of the Adapted CFE. With regard to widening U.S. contacts, in recent days the Transnistrian de facto authorities have barred U.S. diplomats from Embassy Chisinau from entering Transnistria. Kramer reiterated that the Transnistrians seem to have no interest in progress to resolve the conflict. Internationalizing the PKF would signal the international community's commitment not to accept that the status quo is permanent.

Duma

¶10. (C) Kokoshin listened to Kramer's presentation and said there was "some logic" in what Kramer had to say. He promised to think about the issue and to be prepared to discuss it further when Kramer returns to Russia.

¶11. (U) DAS Kramer has cleared this message.
BURNS